(e) Government has set up USO Fund for providing support in the unremunerative rural, remote/inaccessible areas. Government has in addition provided reimbursement of Licence Fee and Spectrum Charges to BSNL from 2000-01 which will continue till 2005-06 for undertaking telephony in unremunerative areas.

BSNL is also undertaking following measures to clear the waitlist:

(i) Large scale deployment of WLL network in rural areas;

(ii) Relaxation of the outdoor cable norms to 5 Kms against the Standard of 2.5 Kms from Landline Exchanges;

(iii) BSNL is deploying its mobile network in all the highways, important towns, pilgrim centers and State highways in that order of priority which gives incidental coverage to large parts of rural areas.

Training to youngsters in I.T. Sector

330. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the projected demand both for Information Technology personnel to meet domestic requirements as well as demand from other nations at present and for the next five years *vis-a-vis* present intake capacity and output; and

(b) the details of comprehensive time bound action plan formulated for training of youngsters in IT to meet domestic requirements and cater to the emerging global requirements of trained manpower by various countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) As per NASSCOM estimates, the total demand for IT Services and Software professionals in FY 2007-08 is estimated to be 1.1 million. Further NASSCOM estimates in 2004, out turn of graduates is 2,460,000 which includes 1,55,000 Engineering degree holders and 1,30,000 Engineering diploma holders while the rest are non-engineering graduates.

(b) The Department of Secondary and Higher Education has launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) @ Schools' during the 10th Plan period. Under the ICT @ Schools scheme, financial assistance is provided to the States/UTs for imparting computer education and computer aided education in Government and Government-aided Secondary and Senior Secondary schools on the basis of CEPs submitted by them. Besides, the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)/Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) each would convert one school into SMART schools in each State/UT, KVS/NVS would also impart computer education and computer aided education to not more than 10 neighbouring schools within a radius of 3 to 4 kilometer. Further, DOEACC Society is engaged in computer education by availing the facilities available in computer training institution in the non-formal sector to generate qualified manpower. Also, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) another society of Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, has various Post Graduate programmes and Diploma courses being conducted in different centres of C-DAC.

Provisioning of rural telephones by Private Telecom Operator

331. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the present number of rural telephone connections in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite major advancement in telecommunication technology penetration is very low in rural areas;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether it would be made mandatory on part of the private telecom operators to set up rural telephones in their respective circles, instead of asking to park a part of their revenues in the form ADC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The number of rural telephone connections in the country as on 31-12-2004 was 1,30,37,333. The Telecom circle-wise details are given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below)